

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method of organizing information around agreements, comprising;
formulating a request by a first party for an agreement with a second party, the request
containing an agreement ID that uniquely identifies the request and any agreement formed
therefrom;
sending the request to the second party;
10 receiving correspondence from the second party regarding the request or any agreement
formed therefrom; and
saving the correspondence from the second party according to the unique agreement ID.
- 15 2. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 1,
wherein the first party has an independent agreement database;
further including the step of storing the request in the agreement database in a record that
includes or is linked to the agreement ID, after formulating the request; and
wherein the step of saving the correspondence from the second party includes storing the
20 second party correspondence in the agreement database of the first party in a record that
includes or is linked to the agreement ID.
- 25 3. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 1, wherein the
correspondence from the second party includes information relating to a counter offer, a request
for clarification, an acceptance or a rejection of the request or a notification that the
correspondence from the second party will be delayed.
- 30 4. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 3, wherein the
correspondence from the second party is encapsulated in an electronic mail message that
contains the agreement ID.

5. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 3,
wherein the correspondence from the second party includes a main body of information
and an attachment to the main body; and
wherein the attachment is according to the agreement ID.

5

6. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 1, wherein the
correspondence from the second party includes information unrelated to the formation or
modification of the agreement, yet still related to the agreement.

10 7. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 6, wherein the
correspondence from the second party is taken from the group consisting of: a facsimile
transmission, an electronic mail message, a letter sent by post, or an HTML document.

15 8. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 6,
wherein the correspondence from the second party includes a main body of information
and an attachment to the main body; and
wherein the attachment is saved according to the agreement ID.

20 9. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 6, wherein the
correspondence from the second party is encapsulated in an electronic mail message that
contains the agreement ID.

10. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 1, further
including the steps of:
25 sending correspondence from the first party to the second party relating to the request or
any agreement derived therefrom; and
saving the correspondence from the first party relating to the request according to the
unique agreement ID given the request.

30 11. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 10,

wherein the first party has an independent agreement database; and

wherein the step of saving the correspondence from the first party relating to the request includes storing the first party correspondence in the agreement database of the first party in a record that includes or is linked to the agreement ID.

5

12. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 10, wherein the correspondence from the first party is responsive to correspondence from the second party and includes a counter offer, a request for clarification, an acceptance or a rejection of a counter offer from the second party or a notification that the correspondence from the first party will be delayed.

10

13. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 12, wherein the correspondence from the first party is encapsulated in an electronic mail message that contains the agreement ID.

15

14. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 12,
wherein the correspondence from the first party includes a main body of information and an attachment to the main body; and
wherein the attachment is saved according to the agreement ID.

20

15. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 10, wherein the correspondence from the first party includes information unrelated to the formation or modification of the agreement, yet still related to the agreement.

25

16. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 15, wherein the correspondence from the first party is taken from the group consisting of: a facsimile transmission, an electronic mail message, a letter sent by post, or an HTML document.

17. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 15,

wherein the correspondence from the first party includes a main body of information and an attachment to the main body; and

wherein the attachment is saved according to the agreement ID.

5 18. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 15, wherein the correspondence from the first party is encapsulated in an electronic mail message that includes the agreement ID.

10 19. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 10, wherein the second party has an independent agreement database; and further comprising the step of storing the request sent to the second party in the database of the second party in a record that includes or is linked to the agreement ID.

15 20. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 10, wherein the second party has an independent agreement database; and further comprising the step of storing the correspondence sent from the first party to the second party in the database of the second party in a record that includes or is linked to the agreement ID.

20 21. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving correspondence by the first party from a third party who is not a party to the agreement between the first and second party;

25 determining an agreement ID of the first party to which the third party correspondence is related; and

storing the correspondence according to the determined agreement ID.

30 22. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 21, wherein the correspondence from the third party is take from a group consisting of: a facsimile transmission, an electronic email message, a letter sent by post or an HTML document.

23. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 21,
wherein the correspondence from the third party includes a main body of information and
an attachment to the main body; and

5 wherein the attachment is saved according to the determined agreement ID.

24. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 1,
wherein a server computer system is configured to manage an agreement database that is
accessible by the first and second parties;

10 further comprising the step of storing the request in the server's agreement database in a
record that includes or is linked to the agreement ID, after formulating the request; and

wherein the step of saving the correspondence from the second party includes storing the
second party correspondence in the server's agreement database in a record that includes or is
linked to the agreement ID.

15 25. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 24, wherein the
correspondence from the second party includes information relating to a counter offer, a request
for clarification, an acceptance or a rejection of the request or a notification that the
correspondence from the second party will be delayed.

20 26. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 25,
wherein the correspondence from the second party includes a main body of information
and an attachment to the main body; and

wherein the attachment is saved according to the agreement ID.

25 27. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 24, wherein the
correspondence from the second party includes information unrelated to the formation or
modification of the agreement, yet still related to the agreement.

28. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 27, wherein the correspondence from the second party is taken from the group consisting of: a facsimile transmission, an electronic mail message, a letter sent by post or an HTML document.

- 5 29. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 27,
wherein the correspondence from the second party includes a main body of information
and an attachment to the main body; and
wherein the attachment is saved according to the agreement ID.

- 10 30. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 24, further
including the steps of:
sending correspondence from the first party to the second party relating to the request;
and
saving the correspondence from the first party relating to the request in the server's
15 agreement database in a record that includes or is linked to the agreement ID.

31. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 30, wherein the
correspondence from the first party is responsive to correspondence from the second party and
includes a counter offer, a request for clarification, an acceptance or a rejection of a counter offer
20 from the second party or a notification that the correspondence from the first party will be
delayed.

32. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 31,
wherein the correspondence from the first party includes a main body of information and
25 an attachment to the main body; and
wherein the attachment is saved according to the agreement ID.

33. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 30, wherein the
correspondence from the first party includes information unrelated to the formation or
30 modification of the agreement, yet still related to the agreement.

34. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 33, wherein the correspondence from the first party is taken from the group consisting of: a facsimile transmission, an electronic mail message, a letter sent by post, or an HTML document.

5

35. A method of organizing information around agreements as recited in claim 33,
wherein the correspondence from the first party includes a main body of information and an attachment to the main body; and
wherein the attachment is saved according to the agreement ID.

10

36. A method of managing agreements to form a supply chain, comprising;
formulating and sending a first request by a first party and receiving a first acceptance from a second party to form a first agreement between the first party and the second party, the first agreement having a unique first agreement ID and specifying a first deliverable to be received by the first party;

15

formulating and sending a second request by the second party and receiving a second acceptance from a third party to form a second agreement between the third party and the second party, the second request including a field for identifying a downstream agreement; and

20

linking the second agreement to the first agreement by including the first agreement ID in the field identifying a downstream agreement to form a supply chain among the first, second and third parties.

37. A method of managing agreements to form a supply chain as recited in claim 36, wherein the step of linking includes:

25

specifying the first deliverable in the second request based on the deliverables of a list of customers, each having a deliverable due from the second party; and

obtaining the first agreement ID based on the deliverable specified.

38. A method of managing agreements to form a supply chain as recited in claim 36,

wherein the step of formulating the second request includes specifying a second deliverable and a date and time for the second deliverable; and

wherein the step of linking includes:

specifying the first deliverable in the second request based on the deliverables of a
5 list of customers, each having a deliverable due from the second party with a due date and time subsequent to the date and time of the second deliverable; and
obtaining the first agreement ID based on the deliverable specified.

39. A method of managing agreements to form a supply chain as recited in claim 36,

10 wherein the step of formulating the second request includes specifying a customer and a second deliverable; and

wherein the step of linking includes:

specifying the first deliverable in the second request based on the deliverables of
the specified customer; and

15 obtaining the first agreement ID based on the deliverable specified.

40. A method of managing agreements to form a supply chain as recited in claim 36,

wherein the step of formulating the second request includes specifying a customer, a second deliverable and a date and time for the second deliverable; and

20 wherein the step of linking includes:

specifying the first deliverable in the second request based on the deliverables of
the specified customer with a due date and time subsequent to the second deliverable; and

obtaining the first agreement ID based on the deliverable specified.

25 41. A method of managing agreements to form a supply chain as recited in claim 36,

wherein the step of formulating the second request includes specifying a folder and a second deliverable; and

wherein the step of linking includes:

specifying the first deliverable in the second request based on the deliverables of a
30 list of customers included in the specified folder; and

obtaining the first agreement ID based on the deliverable specified.

42. A method of managing agreements to form a supply chain as recited in claim 36,

wherein the step of formulating the second request includes specifying a folder, a second

5 deliverable and a date and time for the second deliverable; and

wherein the step of linking includes:

specifying the first deliverable in the second request based on the deliverables of a
list of customers included in the specified folder with a due date and time subsequent to the
second deliverable; and

10 obtaining the first agreement ID based on the deliverable specified.

15